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The Grandview: A two act play (Original writing).

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The Grandview
A two act play
by Steven Spencer

A creative writing project submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor



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1995

To my parents.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisors and friends for their invaluable assistance and incredible patience.

Excerpts from The Grandview were first presented on video on November 16, 1995 with the following cast:

JENNIFER ATKINSON --- Casey Klein
VALERIE ROBERTSON --- Florence Shaw
CLAYTON GARRETT --- Leo Shaw

Directed by DAVID HUDSON

The segments were introduced by the author.

Characters

Florence Shaw	An attractive woman in her late sixties
Leo Shaw	Her son, about forty
Casey Klein	A woman, about twenty five
Mrs. Phillips	A maid, about forty-five
Mr. Gates	An eccentric man, in his seventies
George	An electrician
A Girl	About fifteen. A dreamlike image of Leo's dead sister.

Scene: The stage is divided roughly in half. Stage right is the lobby of the Grandview Hotel. It is dark and gloomy. The Grandview is one of those hotels that achieved its real dignity in the twenties. It is decorated in dark, caramel wood tones, with parquet floors and brass fittings. Down right there is a set of glass, double doors that lead outside. Further downstage there is an opening to the wings which would lead to the rest of the hotel. Up centre there is a short step and then a set of larger doors that lead to the ballroom. Up left, there is a desk with a telephone, and a set of mailboxes with keys inside them. A record player sits on a table by the ballroom doors. There is a comfortable looking chair beside the record player. A half wall and a door separate the two halves of the set. Stage left are the Shaws' room. Up centre there is a dining room with a table, a cabinet and three chairs. There is a window with drawn curtains and a door, which leads to the unseen kitchen. There is a short hall Stage left and a set

of stairs. There are two doors at the top of the stairs, which lead to unseen bedrooms. A door under the stairs opens on a hall, which would presumably lead to Florence's room and the basement. Another door at the end of the hall leads outside. Downstage left there is a sitting room with a locked desk, a divan and a curio cabinet. The top of the cabinet consists of shelves filled with family photographs while the bottom is a shallow cupboard, in which the Shaws keep their silver. The centre stage area should remain roughly open so that it can either be an extension of the hotel lobby or an extension of the Shaw sitting room.

ACT ONE

At Rise: Lights come up on the Shaws' rooms. They are clean, but there is a prevailing sense of decay that haunts the whole hotel. The tile in the dining room is slightly grey, and the wallpaper, once bright, is now faded and torn in places. Florence is in the sitting room, talking on the phone. On the table beside her is an open bottle of wine. She is dressed in a nightgown and an open robe. She takes generous gulps from a water glass full of wine as she talks. Mrs. Phillips sits in the dining room, leafing through a glossy magazine, possibly Cosmopolitan, and looking bored. She is wearing a rumpled maid's uniform. Her coat hangs over the back of the chair.

Florence: Tell him to send a car. It's Florence. Florence Shaw. At the Grandview Hotel. Look, just get Ted. (The phone is hung up on the other end. Florence hangs up the phone and dials again.)

(Leo enters. He is wearing a torn coat and gloves and carrying a very heavy, cardboard box. He carries a wooden placard around his neck like a sandwich board. The placard reads: Summer Ball. There is a silhouette of two dancers over the letters and space for a date to be written underneath. Leo stumbles through the back door into the hall.)

Leo: Hello Mrs. Phillips.

Mrs. Phillips: (Without looking up.) Mr. Shaw, your mother's on the phone again.

(Leo puts down the box and goes into the sitting room. He

picks up the bottle.)

Leo: How far gone is she?

Mrs. Phillips: That's her second.

Florence: *(Into phone.)* Hello. Florence Shaw. Don't hang up on me again. Well, when will he be home? Stop crying. Would you shut up, please? Thank you. Now, tell Ted to send a car, right away.

Leo: You couldn't have stopped her?

Mrs. Phillips: *(Still bored.)* She said she'd kill me with a knife.

Leo: *(To Florence, as if trying to talk a madman into putting down a gun.)* Hi Mom.

Florence: Leo! You're home! How was your day?

Leo: Great Mom.

Florence: Did you find everything at the boat house?

Leo: Just where we left it.

Florence: That's nice.

Leo: Mom, do you think I could use the phone? *(Florence hesitates, hugging the phone to her chest.)* I'll give it right back. Promise.

(Florence, looking a little guilty, passes him the phone. Leo holds the receiver to his ear, and puts his hand over

the mouthpiece.)

Leo: (To Mrs. Phillips.) Who is it?

Mrs. Phillips: Mrs. Lancaster.

Leo: (He puts on his dignified, hotel manager's voice, soft and apologetic. During his speech Florence, gets down on all fours and puts her head in the curio cabinet.) Hello? Mrs. Lancaster? I'm so sorry. Yes, I know. I won't let it happen again. Well, I hope it won't come to that. She's very confused right now. (Florence throws silver over her shoulder, onto the sitting room floor. It lands with a loud clatter. Leo, ignoring his mother, makes noises of assent and understanding.)

Mrs. Phillips: (Picks up coat and begins to walk out.) I'm going home now.

Leo: (Covering phone.) Mrs. Phillips, hold on just a minute.

Florence: She's a thief! A thief!

Mrs. Phillips: The kids haven't had their dinner Mr. Shaw.

Leo: (To Mrs. Phillips, pleading.) One minute. (To Florence.) Shhh. (To phone.) Oh. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Well, Mrs. Lancaster, I can only assure you... Thank you. Goodbye. Mrs. Phillips, were there any more replies today?

Mrs. Phillips: One sir.

Leo: Yes or no?

Mrs. Phillips: I didn't open it. It's still on the front desk. There was a guest, though.

Leo: A guest? Who?

Mrs. Phillips: A young woman. Can I go now sir?

Leo: What was her name?

Mrs. Phillips: Keeler or Klein or something.

Leo: Not Coolidge? Not one of the Coolidge girls? Eugenia or Alice?

Mrs. Phillips: No. Just Klein or something.

Leo: Did she say how long she was staying?

Mrs. Phillips: She paid for ten days, in advance.

Leo: Perfect. When people start arriving for the ball, we won't have any room for her. You told her that we weren't open yet?

Mrs. Phillips: I tried sir. But, she insisted.

Leo: Did you give her one of the rooms in the back?

Mrs. Phillips: Yes. Can I go now?

Leo: Oh, yes. Thank you.

Mrs. Phillips: Goodnight sir. (*Exits.*)

Florence: (*Standing.*) Ah Ha! That proves it. I have

counted the silver.

Leo: *(Tired. Defeated.)* That's nice mom.

Florence: *(Picking up the phone.)* I'll call the police, you try to stop her. You can still catch her if you run.

Leo: No, I can't Mom.

Florence: Sure you can. She's slow. Slow, but crafty!

Leo: Why don't we just go to bed instead?

Florence: I'm not tired. *(She begins to dial.)*

Leo: *(Hangs up the phone.)* I'll bring you warm milk.

Florence: It makes me gag. *(Begins to dial again.)*

Leo: It never made you gag when Dad made it for you.

Florence: Your father always gave me a brandy chaser. Warm brandy makes me sleepy. Warm milk makes me gag. *(Dials.)*

Leo: Mother, who are you calling?

Florence: *(Quietly.)* No one.

Leo: Who are you calling?

Florence: *(She sits down on the divan.)* Ted Lancaster.

Leo: *(Sighs.)* You can't call Ted Lancaster mother.

Florence: I can call whoever I like. This is still my

house Leo.

Leo: You can't call him.

Florence: Why not?

Leo: He died last spring.

Florence: Oh. (Pause.) Oh. I remember now. I was hazy for a minute.

Leo: It's all right Mom. You just had a little too much. You'll be all right in the morning.

Florence: I remember. There were about a thousand lilies on the coffin. Miriam was crying. Not those polite, little tears either. Wailing away. Her nose running. She was shattered, the poor thing. None of us expected that, the way she cheated on him, but she was really done in...Oh my God.

Leo: It's all right Mom.

Florence: Oh, what I said to her. Was she very angry?

Leo: She'll get over it. We'll just phone her in the morning and apologize.

Florence: It was just a bad afternoon. You understand. I was sitting in the kitchen, having a little drink, when all of a sudden, I couldn't breathe. I just had to get away.

Leo: It's all right.

Florence: (Quietly.) Couldn't we Leo?

Leo: What?

Florence: Get away. Go somewhere.

Leo: (*As if he has heard it a thousand times.*) Mom.

Florence: A vacation. Not forever. Just a vacation. The change would do us both some good.

Leo: Not right now, okay? We'll go later.

Florence: When?

Leo: After the opening.

Florence: I don't know if I can hold on that long, Leo. I need to...

Leo: (*Warning.*) Mother. I can't, you understand. I have a million things to do. I've got to get all the maids in from town, then I have to get the hotel ready. I've just dug all the lanterns out of storage, and I have to get the workmen to string them up on the docks. And then, there's the lights on the walkways, and the music...

Florence: I could go.

Leo: Alone?

Florence: Why not? I went to New York alone. I was fifteen then. It was the fourth of July. There were rockets shooting up over the skyline...

Leo: You are not going alone.

Florence: Leo...

Leo: That's enough. All right? We'll just leave it at that.

Florence: You're cruel Leo. I'll never speak to you again.

Leo: Oh, come on. (*Sits on the couch beside her.*) You don't want to miss the opening do you? It'll be just like the old days. The whole afternoon, cars will be pulling up out front. The Shusters will come and the Parkers...

Florence: And the Lancasters?

Leo: Miriam Lancaster. Sure, she'll come. Late as usual. She'll pull up in that old Rolls Royce that Ted never let her drive, and she'll stalk up the front steps, and turn her nose up at you.

Florence: And head straight for the bar.

Leo: Of course. Then at night, there'll be lights everywhere. There'll be lights on the docks, and lights in the rigging of all the sailboats, out on the lake. You won't be able to see where the lake ends and stars begin. And then, the Ball will start. There'll be tuxedos and evening gowns, and girls in their white dresses. (*He stops. A pause.*) Anyway. It'll be great. So, no more talk about going, okay?

Florence: Of course, Leo.

Leo: Will you be all right now?

Florence: Yes.

Leo: No more phone calls?

Florence: (Laughs.) Of course not.

Leo: Good. (He goes to the kitchen to get the box.)

(The wind moans around the house.)

Florence: (Quietly.) The girls in their white dresses.
(Florence sits silently for a moment, then begins to cry.
Leo passes by in the background and sees her weeping on the couch. He turns around and walks back to the kitchen.)

Leo: (From kitchen.) Mom! (He allows Florence a moment to compose herself, then walks back to the sitting room.) Mom, do you need anything?

Florence: (Composed, smiling.) No. Nothing. I think I'll go to bed Leo. This nostalgia is better than warm milk.
(She exits through the door under the stairs.)

(The lights come up dimly in the lobby, while the Shaws' rooms go dark. Leo puts the box down on the desk, and puts the placard by the ballroom doors. He opens the box and takes out a set of chinese lanterns. Unexpectedly, he discovers a record, shoved in with the lanterns. He takes it to the record player, takes it out of its sleeve, and puts it on the turntable. "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" begins to play. After Leo listens for a moment, he goes to the desk, and finds the letter. He examines it, turns it over and over in his hands, and then puts it down and walks away. He walks back to it, picks it up and puts it down. He picks it up a final time, then sits on the step in front of the ballroom with his face in his hands. After a moment or two, he begins to listen to the music, rises and begins to dance

a slow waltz with an invisible partner. Unseen, Casey enters from right. She is dressed in a practical, almost dowdy dress, and a baggy sweater. She stands, unnoticed by Leo for a few moments, watching him dance.)

Casey: I want another room.

Leo: *(He is taken by surprise. He quickly drops his arms, goes to the record player, puts his letter down and takes the needle off the record.)* What?

Casey: I want another room. You are the manager, aren't you? Mr. Shaw? The woman who was here when I came said I'd need to speak to Mr. Shaw.

Leo: Yes, that's me.

Casey: I'm Casey Klein. I'm on the third floor. Near the back.

Leo: *(Puts on manager's mannerisms again, goes to the desk, and opens the guest book.)* And what seems to be the problem with your room...

Casey: There's no problem with it. It's fine I guess. I just need another one. *(She crosses to the glass front doors and looks out.)* There were rooms on the second floor that looked out over the water. Could I get one of those?

Leo: I'm afraid not.

Casey: Why not?

Leo: We don't rent those rooms anymore.

Casey: Why don't you?

Leo: They're staff bedrooms. The staff live there.

Casey: You mean you?

Leo: Yes.

Casey: Oh. (*Thinks.*) Can I get a room that faces the water then?

Leo: I'll see what I can do. (*He looks her up and down.*)
Umm...You do realize that a room with a view of the lake is more expensive.

Casey: How much?

Leo: A hundred dollars a night..

Casey: Oh. Well, maybe we could work something out. No one else is here yet. No one's paying a hundred dollars anyway, so what difference does it make if I stay in one of those rooms?

Leo: I'm sorry Miss. We're expecting several families...

Casey: When?

Leo: Next week.

Casey: Well, couldn't I stay in one of the good rooms until then?

Leo: I'm afraid not. (*Leo quickly pats his pockets.*)
Excuse me. (*Not finding what he's looking for, he starts to*

search the room, retracing his steps. He searches through the following.)

Casey: (Going back and looking out the door, she discovers the letter on the table, and during the following, without letting Leo see, she picks it up, examines it and puts it in her pocket.) My father used to have a house, over on the spit.

Leo: Pardon?

Casey: My father. He used to have a house over on the spit. It was white. There was this clothesline in the backyard. One end was an oar that was set in a block of concrete. When my Mother hung sheets on it, they'd billow and snap like little sails.

(Leo continues to search, ignoring her.)

Casey: We moved when I was little. I don't remember much about it. My Mother and Father used to fight a lot. So, she moved to this little house outside Toronto. All I really remember is the lake and that clothesline, and this set of old train tracks that ran through our back yard.

Leo: *(Looking up.)* The Fair Trunk line.

Casey: What?

Leo: It must have been the Fair Trunk line. There used to be this train that ran people up to the Fairgrounds, years ago, before the highway.

Casey: That must have been it. Anyway. I remember them. There were train tracks outside the new house too.

Sometimes, I'd put my ear up to them and I'd think I heard voices. It's silly really. I'd think they were coming from somewhere exotic, like Paris. People would be laughing and shouting and whispering. Sometimes I'd imagine I heard my Dad, out there on the spit. The other kids used to make fun of me. Not just for that, for a lot of things: because my Mom was lonely and she used to have guys over sometimes. Once, these boys caught me coming home from school. They didn't really do anything. They just walked beside me and said awful things about my Mom. And if I sped up, they'd speed up, so they were always right beside me. Finally, I just broke and ran. I ran down to the railroad tracks and I put my mouth next to the rail and started to scream. I wanted my Dad to hear me. I told him to come and get me. That I couldn't live there any more. Then I put my ear to the rail and listened for an answer. I sat there until it was almost dark.

Leo: *(There is a long pause.)* Then what happened?

Casey: Nothing. I didn't hear anything. And I didn't move back to the spit. And the kids still made fun of me. I guess all that happened was that I got hit for staying out late. And I knew it was stupid to believe that there were voices in the railroad tracks. I still have dreams though. I'll dream that I roll over in bed, and look out the window and see the sun gleaming on the water. It's always disappointing, when I wake up and there's just this white wall where the lake should be. *(A pause.)* Do you think I could get a room that faces the water?

Leo: *(Thinks.)* What was your Dad's name?

Casey: What?

Leo: Your father? What was his name? I might know him. I know a lot of people out on the spit.

Casey: His name was Tony. Tony Klein. He didn't live there long though. Just a couple of years. He moved a little while after Mom left.

Leo: Oh, that's too bad. Where was that house again?

Casey: On the spit.

Leo: Near the tip?

Casey: No. Farther back.

Leo: A little house?

Casey: Yes.

Leo: Sort of pale blue?

Casey: That's right. That's the one.

Leo: Wrong. It was white. Exactly what sort of push over do you take me for? *(He continues his interrupted search.)*

Casey: That's not very nice.

Leo: Hmmm?

Casey: It's not very nice, digging away at people like that.

Leo: If I offended you, I'm very sorry. Feel free to leave.

Casey: How would you like it if somebody did that to you?

Leo: That's why most of us go through life trying to be at least moderately honest.

Casey: That's not true. That's not true at all. Everybody does it. They make things up about themselves, or they don't talk about things. They're just more polite than you are. They don't go around pointing it out to each other.

Leo: Thank you for the advice. Now, could I have a moment? I've lost something.

Casey: Was it a letter?

Leo: Yes, that's it. Where did you see it?

Casey: I can't remember.

Leo: Oh, that's very funny. May I have it please?

Casey: What will you give me for it?

Leo: Give you... Now, listen here, I'm only going to say this once...

Casey: Who's Mr. Gates?

Leo: What?

Casey: Mr. Gates. The name on the envelope said Mr. Gates.

Leo: That's none of your business, now would you please...

Casey: I don't think you're as forthcoming as you pretend.

How much is that letter worth to you?

Leo: Oh. I see. (*Takes a moment and calms down.*) How about five dollars.

Casey: That's not what I had in mind.

Leo: All right, ten. It's all I have on me.

Casey: No, I don't think so. I am perfectly willing to restore your letter to you, free of charge. I just want to know a few things about you. The little things you don't like to talk about. Like, why that letter is so important. It can't be that difficult can it?

Leo: Twenty dollars.

Casey: I see. Not so high and mighty now are we?

Leo: All right. (*Clears his throat.*) My father was the deposed king of Siam. I was the rightful heir, but...

Casey: Not funny. At least my story had a ring of truth to it. I would have given up a room for a story as good as mine. If you were a better liar I might find it in my heart to give you the letter.

Leo: Okay. What would you like to hear?

Casey: What's the letter?

Leo: It's an RSVP.

Casey: For a party?

Leo: No. For the opening weekend of the hotel. Look, I'll be straight with you, just to show you how it's done. I can't give you a room on the water because there might be a lot of people here soon. Very rich people. The hotel will be filled. Mrs. Phillips should have sent you away as soon as you got here, but she doesn't like to argue with anybody.

Casey: Very rich people?

Leo: Yes.

Casey: Like Mr. Gates?

Leo: Yes. He's from one of the old families. Look, it's the last RSVP and I'd like to see if he's coming or not.

Casey: What did the others say?

Leo: They said no.

Casey: But, you're still expecting the place to be filled?

Leo: It doesn't matter. It only takes one family.

Casey: One very big family?

Leo: That's not what I mean. One family comes and the rest follow. That's how my Grandfather started this hotel. No one had ever heard of the Grandview then. It wasn't much more than a hunting lodge. Then, one summer this yacht glided down the lake and anchored at the dock. Do you know who it was? Hiram Lancaster. Of Lancaster paper. He'd run out of gas on his way up the Saint Lawrence. He'd been in Montreal and he hated it. All the noise and the traffic. But, he loved it here. It was so quiet and everyone had

manners. He called it the last oasis of elegance on the river. So, he stayed. Then, one by one, they started to arrive. All of Lancaster's friends and their families came down to spend the summer. Before my Grandfather knew it, the Grandview was the place to stay.

Casey: Here? *(She points out the dingy lobby.)*

Leo: What is that supposed to mean?

Casey: Well, it's just that it's a little run down, don't you think?

Leo: Now. Today. But it's just a coat of dust. In a week it'll sparkle. You should have seen this place before we closed down. There were thirty maids and fifteen porters. Three days before opening weekend it was filled with the smell of food cooking. People were running through the lobby. There were a million things to do. Then, when everything was ready, we'd stand on the front lawn and wait. It was still at first, like the world was holding its breath. Then, we'd see the glint of the sun on a windshield as a car pulled into the drive. Then, another one, and another. It was like the floodgates had opened, and people came pouring in.

Casey: What happened?

Leo: What do you mean?

Casey: Why did you close down?

Leo: *(Quietly.)* We had to. Look can I have that letter now?

Casey: I don't think so.

Leo: What?

Casey: You're still lying.

Leo: I am not lying.

Casey: Then you're not telling the whole story, and that's just as bad.

Leo: Well, you can say that about anything I tell you and then you never have to give me the letter.

Casey: You're right. Things like the truth are far too subjective. I guess I'll have to ask for something more concrete. There's still the matter of that room.

Leo: (*Throws up hands.*) All right. You win. I'll give you a room on the lake.

Casey: Not good enough. I want one on the second floor.

Leo: You mean my room? You want me to take you where I live?

Casey: Is it dirty?

Leo: What are you thinking, asking me that? I'm a complete stranger. What if I was some sort of pervert?

Casey: You're not.

Leo: You don't know that.

Casey: Are you a pervert?

Leo: Yes.

Casey: No you're not. You are a bad liar. No, I think you're a harmless man, around middle age. You probably live alone or with your mother. Am I right? Now, if you let me stay in your rooms for the night, I am willing to give you back your letter. What do you say?

Leo: Why don't I just take it?

Casey: (*Dismissing the idea.*) Please.

Leo: I'm not going along with this any more.

Casey: Fine. I'll just go then. (*Casey moves toward the door.*) Goodbye.

Leo: First of all, don't touch anything.

Casey: All right.

Leo: And it's only for tonight. None of this stuff about me not keeping up my end. One night and then you give me back the letter tomorrow morning.

Casey: Agreed.

Leo: You stay in one room. And don't think about sneaking out. I'm going to stay up and make sure you stay put. One room. Everything else is off limits.

Casey: The bathroom?

Leo: One room and the bathroom. That's it.

Casey: All fine. And may I say, a very good attempt to anticipate any trouble I might get into.

Leo: (*Thinks.*) No phone calls.

Casey: Good thinking. Anything else?

Leo: Yes. As long as we're on the subject. No more questions about me. All information about me or my family is strictly off limits.

Casey: And you have nothing to hide.

Leo: That's right.

Casey: Do you live alone?

Leo: What difference does it make?

Casey: Well, am I going to run into anybody in the middle of the night?

Leo: No. My mother is in bed. And with any luck you'll be gone before she wakes up.

Casey: And if I happen to run into her, in a hallway or something? On the way to the bathroom. What do I tell her?

Leo: I don't know.

Casey: Does your mother have a sister?

Leo: I said no questions.

Casey: Please, this is for your own good.

Leo: One.

Casey: Older or younger?

Leo: Younger.

Casey: How old?

Leo: I don't know. Fifty maybe.

Casey: Are she and your mother close?

Leo: We haven't heard from her since she got married.

Casey: When was that?

Leo: I don't know? I was seven I think.

Casey: Does this sister have any children?

Leo: I don't know.

Casey: Does your mother know?

Leo: Probably not.

Casey: What's her name?

Leo: (*Thinks.*) Rhea.

Casey: How sharp is your mother?

Leo: At the moment? Not very.

Casey: Good. I'm your Aunt Rhea's daughter. I'm stopping by on my way to Montreal. I'm on my way to see somebody. My sister. She's having twins and I'm going up to see her. It's a holiday. Where am I from?

Leo: I don't know.

Casey: I mean, where does your aunt live? It doesn't matter. We moved. We live in Regina. What's my last name?

Leo: Ummm...Stewart.

Casey: What do I call you?

Leo: Mr. Shaw.

Casey: Be realistic. We're cousins now.

Leo: Leo. It's short for Leonard.

Casey: Does Leonard shorten to Leo?

Leo: It does for me.

Casey: Leo then. And your mother's name is...?

Leo: Florence.

Casey: Aunt Florence. There, does that bear up to close scrutiny?

Leo: Barely.

Casey: It'll do. Now take me to my room.

Leo: All right, it's this way. Do you need to get anything?

Casey: I don't have any luggage.

Leo: No luggage?

Casey: When I came here...I was in sort of...It was odd when I left.

Leo: I'm not surprised.

Casey: That's enough. If I'm not allowed to ask any questions then neither are you.

Leo: Fair enough. *(He leads her through the door, into the Shaw's rooms. The lights come up softly. Leo calls out at the bottom of the stairs.)* Mom? *(There is no reply. Leo climbs the stairs. Casey follows him, examining every detail of the house. At the top of the stairs Leo stops and calls again.)* Mom. *(Casey begins to follow him, but only reaches the third step before Leo waves his arms desperately and stops her. He rushes back.)* Not that one. It creaks. Mom can hear it a mile away. *(Casey shrugs and they walk up the hallway. He points to a door.)* In here.

Casey: *(Quietly.)* Goodnight. Sleep well. *(She passes through the door. Leo is about to go through the other door, to his bedroom, but thinks better of it and goes downstairs. He takes a chair from the dining room and puts it beside Casey's bedroom door. He sits down, ready to stand guard. There is a blackout.)*

(Lights rise on the following morning. Leo is asleep in the chair. Casey, comes quietly through the door, her hair

messed, her clothing rumpled. She has obviously slept in them. She takes the letter out of her pocket and puts it in Leo's lap. She then goes downstairs. She walks into the sitting room and begins to look around, picking up pictures, etc. As she picks one up, she notices a key on the table. She takes the key and walks to the locked, roll top desk, and unlocks it. She examines a half empty bottle of scotch. There are several empty bottles in the desk. She puts these back where she found them, then opens a drawer. Inside, she discovers a nickel plated revolver. She puts it back, closes the desk and locks it. She walks out into the hall and begins to examine things. She hears Leo move upstairs. She creeps up, to see if he is still asleep. He is. She steps rather loudly on one of the steps. Leo doesn't move. She stamps on the next step and looks back. Leo continues to sleep. She jumps, with both feet, on the next step. Leo doesn't wake up. She walks happily down the stairs. There is a loud creak when she reaches the third step. Immediately, Florence appears in the hallway carrying a glass of tomato juice.)

Florence: Leo, have you got any aspirin...(Seeing Casey.)
Oh my God. (She drops the glass of tomato juice on the hall carpet.)

Casey: (Pause.) Aunt Florence?

Florence: Aunt Florence?

Casey: I'm Rhea's daughter. Casey.

Florence: Who?

Casey: (Descending the stairs.) Oh no. Leo forgot to tell you. I'm not surprised. He forgot all about picking me up

at the train station last night. I had to phone at midnight. Of course, he said that he thought the train was supposed to get in at twelve thirty, when he knew perfectly well that it came in at eleven fifteen, and just my luck, the train was on time for once. Aunt Florence?

Florence: I'm sorry. It's just that, for a moment, I thought...Never mind. I'm a little under the weather this morning. *(She looks at the mess on the carpet.)* Look what I've done. Well, come and sit down, while I pour myself a refill. *(Florence exits through the back door into the kitchen. Casey continues to talk to her through the door.)*

Casey: That's right. I was on my way to Montreal to see my sister Gina. She's going to have a baby. Well, twins actually. She's due in a month. Mom and Dad wanted to come right away, but they're still busy with Judy's new baby and they just couldn't take the time off.

Florence: *(She enters with a bottle of tomato juice.)*
Judy's new baby?

Casey: *(Sitting down.)* Judy? My aunt? On my father's side. She and her husband Matt had a baby this spring. Little Paul. He's adorable. He was premature, so it's still a little tense. But, he's a fighter. You didn't get a notice? We sent them to absolutely everyone.

Florence: Rhea and I don't get along.

Casey: So, Mom and Dad are coming down later. And Mom said, as long as you're going up that way, why not take a little detour and stop in on your Aunt Florence? I'm sure she'd be thrilled to see you. Confidentially, I think I'm supposed to be an olive branch. You know, come down, fill

you in on all the family business, show you that Mom doesn't hold any grudges.

Florence: Your mother holds plenty of grudges. I said "damn" once, at the dinner table, and she didn't speak to me for two months.

Casey: Well, all right, I'll come right out and admit it. It was my idea. It just bothered me, that I had an aunt I'd never seen and...

Florence: *(Florence opens the curtains, and bathes the dining room in light. She turns and looks at Casey.)* You don't look like Rhea.

Casey: Mom says I favour Dad's side of the family.

Florence: That's not it.

Casey: My God, look at your eyes.

Florence: What!

Casey: They're such a pale blue. I've never seen that color before. I put a lot of stock in eye color. Windows to the soul. Mine are green see, so we complement each other. That's a good sign. It means we'll get along.

Florence: You don't look like your father either. You look like...My God. What are you wearing? Did you sleep in that?

Casey: Well, I took this detour, you see, and well, my luggage is on its way to Montreal...and I'm here.

Florence: And Leo let you sleep like that? That's just like him. Okay, let's make breakfast and I'll try to find you something to wear. Do you cook?

Casey: A little.

Florence: Good. I sure don't. Right, you start something with whatever I've got in the fridge and I'll go see if I can't find you some clothes. I think we might have something in the basement. All right?

Casey: I'll get right on it Florence. (Casey exits.)

Florence: (She looks at her tomato juice, and winces. She takes a bottle of wine out of the dining room cabinet and uncorks it.) Hair of the dog. Cheers. (She drinks then exits through the door to her bedroom.)

(Upstairs, Leo wakes up. He notices the letter on his chest. He turns it over in his hands. He then rises and knocks warily at the bedroom door. There is no answer. He opens it and sees nothing inside. Leo opens his letter, then rushes down the stairs.)

Leo: (Calling.) Mom. You'll never guess what happened. I got a letter from the Gates. Do you know what they said? Yes. They said yes. They'll be here tonight. (He notices the spilled glass of tomato juice. He picks it up and speaks to the kitchen door.) Little accident Mom? (Florence enters through the bedroom door with a box of clothes.)

Florence: Good morning Leo.

Leo: Mom?

Florence: You're going to get a piece of my mind, young man.

Leo: Who's in the kitchen?

(Casey enters through the kitchen door, carrying two plates.)

Casey: I found eggs. I hope you like them fried. I'm not much of a cook.

Leo: Oh my God. *(He drops the glass.)*

Florence: I hope you're going to clean that up. *(Changing tack completely.)* Leaving this poor girl at the train station half the night. You should be ashamed of yourself Leo.

Casey: *(Sits at the table.)* Leo's still a little groggy, I think. Why don't you sit down and have breakfast with us Leo?

Florence: *(Eating.)* You should try this Leo. The girl is a marvel in the kitchen.

Casey: I just threw a few things together. Nothing fancy.

Florence: *(To Leo.)* Well, are you just going to stand there all morning?

Leo: No. Mom, could I talk to...

Casey: Casey.

Leo: ...Casey, alone for a minute.

Florence: Leo, what is wrong with you this morning?

Casey: (*Stands.*) It's no problem Florence. I told Leo he'd have to apologize for his tardiness when he woke up and he's embarrassed about doing it in front of his mother. Right Leo?

Leo: Right. (*He takes her arm and leads her to the sitting room. He begins to whisper.*) What is this? I thought we had a deal.

Casey: We did. (*Casey moves to the desk.*)

Leo: One night. One room. (*She sits at the desk.*) Please don't sit there.

Casey: Why ever not?

Leo: I don't like people sitting at my desk. There are important papers and...Look, we had a deal and you're sticking to it.

Casey: Do you have your precious letter?

Leo: Yes.

Casey: Well that changes everything.

Leo: How?

Casey: You let me sleep in that empty room last night, and in return, I was supposed to give you back your letter. I followed all of your rules and returned the letter. There was nothing in our deal about leaving. I have just completed our arrangement and now I'm trying to make a new

arrangement with your mother.

Leo: (*Sits at the desk.*) I can't win, can I?

Casey: No Leo, I don't think you can. But, I'll tell you what, I'll give you one more try.

Leo: No thank you. Now, I have some business to attend to, so if you wouldn't mind...

Casey: Well, someone is in a hurry this morning.

Leo: Yes, because this changes everything. (*He shows her the letter.*) The Gates are coming tonight and I still have a hundred things to do. So, if you would kindly be on your way, I have a few misconceptions about your identity to clear up with my mother.

Casey: Leo, if you'd only listen, I'm sure we could come to some arrangement.

Leo: What could possibly make me do that?

Casey: I guess you'll never know.

Leo: I see. (*Pause.*) That's why you win. Because I let you drag me down to your level.

Casey: Will you listen to my offer?

Leo: (*Struggles with himself.*) Fine. Let's hear it.

Casey: All right. Well, you're so perceptive Leo, seeing right through me. How about you give me a chance to show how perceptive I can be? I'll tell you three things I

can't possibly know about you. If I can do that, then you in turn, answer three questions about you and your family.

Leo: I said no questions.

Casey: That was the old deal Leo. This is virgin territory.

Leo: And if you can't?

Casey: Then we go ahead as planned. I go away and you never see me again.

Leo: No deal. Goodbye.

Casey: Oh Leo, please. It'll take five minutes. Five minutes at the most. And at the end of it, if you aren't impressed, then I'll leave without a fuss. I'll even let you decide if you're impressed or not. What do you have to lose?

Leo: *(Checks his watch.)* You have five minutes. Starting now.

Casey: Okay. *(She starts to look around the room. She picks a picture off the curio cabinet.)* That's you isn't it? In the little suit?

Leo: No hints from me.

Casey: Look at that face. Nobody was going to get a smile out of you. And the way you have your arm around that girl. Look at her trying to squirm. Your sister? *(Leo is silent.)* All right, be that way. Number one: I think you were a serious kid. You were probably the kind that tries to act

like a grownup when he's six. You always did what you were told, stayed clean, took every little responsibility seriously.

Leo: You're guessing.

Casey: Am I right?

Leo: (*Silence.*)

Casey: Then what does it matter?

Leo: I'm not impressed.

Casey: All right. Breathe on me. (Leo lets out a sceptical breath and Casey sniffs loudly.) You're also a secret drinker. (Leo breathes into his hands trying to smell his own breath.) Now, let me see. For the last one, something really amazing. You aren't very happy are you Leo?

Leo: Come on.

Casey: As a matter of fact, I'd say you were very unhappy. I'd say sometimes you sit down here, after everyone has gone to bed, and the house is quiet, drinking your secret drinks, getting more and more unhappy. And I think you think about killing yourself. You probably have it all set up. A noose under your mattress, a bottle of sleeping pills in the bottom drawer of your dresser. A gun? Yes, you look like the type who has a gun. I think some nights, you turn it over and over in your hands. Maybe you even put it to your temple and think about pulling the trigger, but you never quite find the strength. Something always stops you.

Leo: That's enough.

Casey: Then, I win?

Leo: This has gone far enough.

Casey: Fine. I suppose I'll have to go in and tell your mother three things I couldn't possibly know about you. It would be difficult for you to act so superior if she knew you were down here at night nipping away at scotch bottles and rolling that gun barrel around your temple. Or I could tell the Gates. Would you prefer that? I win? (Leo nods.) Good. Now, what shall I ask? (She picks up the picture from the curio cabinet.) Who's the girl in the picture Leo, the one you have your arm around? (Leo is silent.) Come on, don't be a sore loser. They aren't hard questions.

Leo: My sister.

Casey: See, that wasn't so bad. Where is she now?

Leo: She's gone. She passed away. A long time ago.

Casey: Oh, that's terrible. How did it happen?

Leo: Her heart stopped beating.

Casey: Are you going to be difficult Leo?

Leo: Yes.

Casey: Fair enough. I'll ask a different question. (She picks up another photograph.) Who are the people in this picture? I recognize you. And that's your sister? What was her name?

Leo: Dawn.

Casey: (Quietly.) Dawn. And there's Florence. She was so pretty then. Who's this?

Leo: My father. Leonard Shaw senior.

Casey: And where is he?

Leo: That's more than three questions.

Casey: Well, you welshed on our deal when you wouldn't answer my question about your sister. I'll rephrase it this way: Who are these people and where are they now?

Leo: My father died of lung cancer two years ago. Are you finished now?

Casey: You see Leo, that's how I can see right through you. I always know what will get to you because that's the thing you won't talk about. For instance, you're willing to give me all sorts of information about your father's death, but you won't say a word about your sister. Why is that Leo?

Leo: I'll get you.

Casey: What?

Leo: I'll get you.

Casey: How Leo? You can't outwit me and you aren't the type that would resort to violence.

Leo: I don't know, but I'll get you.

(Florence enters from the kitchen, holding a wine glass.)

Florence: My, we certainly are quiet. What's all the whispering out here?

Casey: I was just getting to know Leo a little better Florence. Right Leo? *(Leo is silent.)*

Florence: Leo, don't you have something better to do than hang around here all day? And you young lady, you come in and eat your breakfast before it gets any colder.

Casey: Go ahead Aunt Florence. I'll be right there. *(There is a moment of silence as Casey and Leo are left alone.)* Don't tell her the truth Leo. If you do, I'll be on the front steps greeting Mr. Gates and I'll have to tell him all about...*(She cocks her fingers at her temple and pulls an imaginary trigger. She exits to the dining room.)* Oh, Florence, there are so many things I want to tell you, about Aunt Judy and Uncle Matt.*(They continue speaking in mime, but the stage is silent. Casey takes off her cardigan and puts it over the back of the chair, making herself at home. Leo stands quietly and goes into the hall. He takes his coat off a peg and goes out, just as Mrs. Phillips is coming in.)*

Mrs. Phillips: Good morning Mr. Shaw. *(Leo does not answer as he disappears out the door.)* Crazy, the whole family. Crazy.

(Casey and Florence now cease speaking in mime. Casey is eating while Florence leans back in her chair, drinking wine. As Casey talks Florence simply looks at her, examining her face.)

Casey: Then, Mom pointed to your picture and said: It's none of your business who they are, so just let it drop. I

couldn't believe that Mom wouldn't tell me about you and Uncle Leonard, so I...

(Mrs. Phillips enters.)

Florence: Shhhh.

Casey: What....(Florence points to the hallway.)

Mrs. Phillips: Good morning Mrs. Shaw.

Florence: (Smiling.) Good morning Mrs. Phillips. (Under her breath.) You rotten hag.

(Mrs. Phillips examines the tomato juice stain on the carpet, and picks up the glass. She enters the dining room.)

Casey: (To Mrs. Phillips.) Hello.

(Mrs. Phillips ignores her and exits to the kitchen.)

Casey: Florence what are you....

Florence: Shhhhh.

(Mrs. Phillips returns with a bucket.)

Florence: That's all right Mrs. Phillips. I wonder if you wouldn't mind starting on the suites upstairs this morning. Mr. Shaw is expecting guests. (Mrs. Phillips looks at her quizzically, puts down her bucket and starts to walk, slowly out of the dining room.) That's right. Right through there. (Mrs. Phillips exits into the lobby.) I hate her. Do you see the way she looks at me? (Mrs. Phillips returns.)

Mrs. Phillips: Mrs. Shaw, if I don't get that stain...

Florence: Oh, I quite like that stain Mrs. Phillips. It lends a spot of color to those old carpets. (Mrs. Phillips shrugs and exits through the wings, out into the hotel.) There did you see it?

Casey: See what?

Florence: The look. Like she's looking right through me, as if I weren't there. I could stand her if she shouted at me, or gossiped, or something. But, the indifference gets to me. She just goes about her business like I'm not here. I shout, I swear, I get raging drunk and threaten her with the cutlery, but she just goes on scrubbing the hall carpets.

Casey: Florence?

Florence: What?

Casey: Are you happy here?

Florence: What an odd question. (She rises and crosses to the cabinet and takes out another bottle of wine. She tries to uncork it during the following.) I'm not sure how to answer that. Oh, I may not be smiling all the time, but I'm not bad off. I've still got my health. And I've got a roof over my head. And I've got Leo. I've had a good life. I have a lot of good memories. (She stops struggling with the bottle. Her back is still to Casey.) I've been sick for a long time. I think I had a good chance at getting better, once. You see, I used to have a routine. I'd get up every morning, brush my hair, get dressed, start breakfast. And everyone would smile at me. It felt wonderful. You see, I

thought they were smiling because they knew I was getting better. And as long as I kept up the old routine, one day I would stop feeling so shattered. But, I wasn't satisfied. I wanted to have a little set back, so they'd frown and look concerned and tell me to get back on that old horse. So, I stopped brushing my hair. And everyone still smiled. And the next morning I didn't get dressed. And they still smiled. Because, you see, they weren't smiling because I was getting better. They were all just pretending that everything was normal, that nothing had changed. After that, the routine fell apart, bit by bit. Now I get up every morning. That's all I have left.

(There is a long silence. Casey rises and touches Florence on the shoulder. Florence composes herself.) Listen to me. How did we ever get so gloomy? *(She turns smiling, and opens the box with the clothes.)* Oh God, these all smell like mothballs.

Casey: I don't mind. I don't dress up much.

Florence: Nonsense. I have some very fine dresses tucked away, up in the attic. I was your size once, a couple of centuries ago. A few of them should fit.

Casey: Let's get to it, then.

Florence: *(Stands and looks at the wine bottle on the table. She looks up at Casey. She leaves the wine bottle and opens the door into the hotel. She looks back one last time at the bottle.)* Well, the journey of a thousand steps. *(They exit out into the wings.)*

(Leo enters from left, carrying cardboard boxes.)

Leo: Mom? Hello Mom? *(There is no answer. Mrs. Phillips*

enters from right, with her bucket, and begins to scrub at the hall carpet.) Mrs. Phillips have you seen my mother?(He spots Casey's sweater, still hanging over the back of the chair and quietly examines it.)

Mrs. Phillips: She was talking to the young lady, last time I saw her. They told me to clean the upstairs suites, but there was this tomato juice on the carpet.

Leo: Yes, clean the upstairs suites. The Gates are coming tonight.

Mrs. Phillips: Tonight? We're not open until next week.

Leo: Well, I'm not about to quibble over schedules.

Mrs. Phillips: *(Resigned.)* Yes, Mr. Shaw. How many?

Leo: There's the grandfather, Mr. and Mrs. Gates, two children I think. Better make it four suites, just to be on the safe side. Would you please leave that alone?

(Mrs. Phillips, exits left, with her bucket. There is a loud knock at the front door. She struggles for a moment, between her instructions and the knocking. Leo begins to unpack his box, taking out more lanterns, a length of wire, an antique and dusty lamp. No longer able to resist temptation, he picks up the sweater and goes through the pockets. He produces a wrinkled postcard and a ring.)

Mrs. Phillips: *(Leaning through the door to the lobby.)* There's someone at the door Mr. Shaw.

Leo: Well, let them in.*(He unfolds the postcard and begins to read. Mrs. Phillips puts down her mop and bucket, and*

exits through the front door.)

Mrs. Phillips: *(Returning.)* It's the electrician from town. He wants to know what you want done.

Leo: *(Pockets the ring, and the piece of paper.)* Well, tell him we need lights hung all along the docks and on the...*(Mrs. Phillips is looking at him blankly.)* That's all right. I'll do it myself. God, if you want anything done right...*(They exit.)*

(Casey enters from the wings. She is now wearing a long, flowing, white evening gown. Florence follows, in another evening gown. Florence has shaken that air of alcoholism and slow death that has haunted her, and for the first time we see how little of the beauty of her youth she has lost. Casey stares at her in wonder.)

Florence: Well, what do you think?

Casey: You look stunning.

Florence: Do you think so?

Casey: Absolutely.

Florence: What do you say we go out on the town tonight? A little dinner, a little dancing.

Casey: Florence, you can't be serious. Where would we go? There's no place around for a hundred miles where we could dress like this.

Florence: So, we'll go more than a hundred miles. We'll go a thousand. All the way to New York, or Los Angeles, or

Monte Carlo.

Casey: (*Dismissing the idea.*) Florence.

Florence: Well, I can dream can't I? Have you ever been to Los Angeles?

Casey: No.

Florence: I have. I even saw Hollywood. One time when Leonard and I were in Burbank we saved up all our money and he took me out to dinner there. Errol Flynn was at the restaurant that night. (*Dreamy.*) Errol Flynn. I fell in love with him when I was twelve. Everything about him was so big, so beautiful. I must have seen Robin Hood a dozen times. He came through a crowd of people by the door and looked my way. He smiled. Then he bowed to me. He actually bowed. Leonard was so jealous. He almost pulled my arm off taking me to the table. He always over reacted like that. Silly. Errol Flynn wasn't going to steal me away. Do you know the first thing I thought when I saw him? Who is that old man? (*Laughs.*) He must have been in his forties. There were lines around his eyes and when he wasn't smiling he had this look, like he couldn't quite understand where he was. I missed Hollywood by a couple of decades. By the time I got there all that was left were dirty sound stages and filthy little buildings. Still, there were beautiful places along the way. There was a field in Kansas. We could see the wind moving across the wheat from a mile off. It was funny how things worked out. Mostly, the things I anticipated turned out to be junk, while the little things I'd never thought about were the things I ended up treasuring forever.

Casey: I've never been anywhere.

Florence: Oh, come on, Rhea must have taken you out. Aspen? The Hamptons? Those places where the rich and the boring go these days?

Casey: No. Mother kept me close to home.

Florence: Well, you should get out and see the world. While you're young.

Casey: I've never really wanted to. I suppose I'm boring at heart. Mostly, I think about settling down some place, where I'm needed, doing a little work...

Florence: (*Shivers.*) It gives me chills. You should never sit in one place for too long. When you're travelling the world is always fresh. There's always new things, new people. When you sit in one place, all you can do is watch things die.

Casey: How old were you, when you went to Los Angeles?

Florence: Nineteen. But, it was a long road there, let me tell you. I ran away from here when I was fifteen. Well, ran away with Leonard, who happened to have a big trust fund. Not quite as free wheeling as it sounds. Of course, your mother wouldn't tell you about that. Rhea hated me for leaving. Rhea was like my parents. She always had one eye on what other people thought of her. We must remain respectable. We mustn't annoy the guests. We must think about our reputation. They always wore the right clothes, went to the right parties, listened to the right music. By the time I was twelve I was in the basement reading The Chinese Room and drinking the scotch I'd stolen from Dad's liquor cabinet.

Casey: (*Laughing.*) Florence, the things you say.

Florence: Oh, I was a perfect scandal. Not that there was anyone around, besides my parents, to be shocked. The important families had all stopped coming. There were bigger, more fashionable hotels, in the States or on the west coast. Somewhere else. Anywhere else. The parents were the ones who liked the Grandview. When they died the children stopped coming. Soon, the whole place was empty. So, I couldn't see any reason to behave. My parents were just going through the motions, putting on their tuxedos and ball gowns, drinking champagne, and practicing their charming conversation. It was sad, like a play that keeps going on, long after the audience had left the theatre. By the time Leonard and I came back, my parents were practically broke. Your mother hated us right away. I was a family scandal. She thought I was the reason that all the old families were staying away. Rhea never missed a chance to lay into me for the way I acted. The little rat. And Leonard? She hated Leonard. You couldn't keep them in the same room together. So, as soon as she turned eighteen, she married your father and moved as far away from us as she could.

Casey: Did you close down the hotel then?

Florence: God no. When we came back from California, Leonard went to work here. It was a renaissance. Leonard knew how to pull them in. He started with big singers in the ball room. Bobby Vinton, Fabian. Have you ever heard of them? They weren't exactly at the height of their careers anymore, but they were big once and they were willing to play in little places like this. Soon, people started to trickle in from all over the country. Everyone who used to come here for their summer vacations when they

were twelve, came back to drink in our bar, hear Leonard's tacky Hollywood stories and listen to the kind of music their parents wouldn't let them listen to when they were young. I guess that was the thrill. It was sort of like making love in a church pew. Perverse isn't it? Mom and Dad sort of faded away after that. Dad tried dressing up in his tuxedo and greeting people at the door for a while, but everyone thought he was a doorman. Phil Silvers tipped him fifty dollars once. Dad just stared at the bill, like he couldn't quite think what it was. He stopped trying after that. He died a couple of years later. That was something else Rhea blamed us for. Funny, about Leonard and me. We always tried to lead good lives, but somehow we managed to leave a trail of bodies behind us.

Casey: What was he like?

Florence: Leonard? He drank too much and he liked to sleep with cheap women. But, all things considered, I drank too much and slept with cheap men. Still, he was good with the children, most of the time, and he put food on the table.

Casey: Do you miss him?

Florence: All the time. All right, your turn. What was it like living with your mother?

Casey: Oh, you don't want to hear about that.

Florence: Sure I do. I always wondered if she was still a snobby rat? What did she put you and your poor sister through? Come on, give me all the dirt.

Casey: (Quietly.) I ran away.

Florence: What?

Casey: I told you I was going to Montreal, but that's not true. Gina wouldn't take me. She was the bad seed in our family. She was always sneaking out at one in the morning, to meet boys, drinking in little clubs, where they weren't fussy about I.D.'s, disappearing for a week at a time and coming back with stories about concerts and big cities. Mom thought she'd just given Gina too much freedom. She wasn't going to make the same mistake with me. I didn't mind, at first. I wasn't very exciting anyway. So, I just stayed in my room and didn't get in any trouble. And that gave Mom a good example to hold up to Gina. Casey never stays out until three in the morning. Casey never gets drunk in basement bars. Casey never has to hitchhike to the free clinic. Casey is our good girl. Finally, Gina couldn't stand it anymore. She just took off for Montreal with one of her boyfriends. But, Mom wasn't done. She was determined I wasn't going to end up like Gina. When I got older, Mom still expected me to be a good example, so she could tell all her friends: Look, I raised one right. Sure I made some mistakes with Gina, but look how quiet Casey is. One day I woke up and realized that I'd spent my whole life being her good example. So, I walked out and got on a train and came here. What would you have done Florence, if it had been you? If someone had hemmed you in like that?

Florence: Does Rhea know you're here?

Casey: I couldn't tell her where I was going.

Florence: We'll have to phone her. She'll be half out of her mind with worry.

Casey: I phoned her, a couple of nights ago, just to tell

her I was okay. She kept asking where I was, but I wouldn't tell her. She'd come after me. I know she would.

Florence: Well, what are you going to do now?

Casey: I know it's asking a lot. I don't have any right. But, could I stay here, with you? I can cook and clean and things like that. I'm a grown woman Florence. She can't keep me anymore. And I don't have anywhere else to go.

Florence: (*Thinks.*) All right.

Casey: Thank you Florence. (*She hugs her.*)

Florence: Hey, I'm just doing it, because I know it will drive Rhea crazy. She deserves the aggravation. The little rat. (*She stands.*) Look at us. All dressed up and no place to go. Well, if we can't go to California, I think we could at least try to get as far as town. I tell you what, lunch is on me. (*She walks through the doors into the Shaw rooms.*) We'll change into something a little more casual, and then we'll get the car warmed up and go. (*Leo enters with George, a handy man.*)

Leo: We'll need lights all around the lobby...

George: (*To Florence. Taking off his hat.*) Hello Ma'am.

Leo: Sorry Mom. I didn't know you were in here. I'm just showing...

George: (*Holding out his hand.*) George.

Leo: George here, where to string the lights for the ball.

Florence: (*Shaking George's hand.*) No trouble at all.
Casey and I were just leaving.

Leo: Leaving?

Florence: I'm taking Casey out for lunch. I'd ask you to come along, but I know how busy you are.

Leo: That's all right Mom. I have other plans. George, allow me to show you the chandeliers. (*They exit into the ballroom.*)

Florence: If I live a hundred years, I'll never understand the first thing about that boy. This morning he won't say two words, and now he's happy as a lark. Happy as a lark. Imagine that. (*She exits to her room. Casey is left on stage. She picks up her sweater. Noticing something wrong, she runs her hands through the pockets. Finding nothing, she begins to search the floor around the chair. Leo enters. He crosses to the desk, opens it and pours himself a drink.*)

Leo: Lost something? (*He drinks.*)

Casey: (*Stands quickly.*) You're drinking. Aren't you afraid that someone will see you?

Leo: I don't have any secrets from you. (*There is a long pause. Casey stands nonchalantly, looking at the floor while Leo watches her and drinks.*)

Casey: (*Finally.*) Don't you have something to do?

Leo: Oh, not really. George there is at work on the lights and Mrs. Phillips is upstairs getting the suites ready. The

men who do the lawns and the fountain won't be here until Friday, so I think I can spare a little time to sit back, have a relaxing chat.

Casey: Why don't you go away before you do something stupid?

Leo: Oh, you mean, because of the drinking? Never happen. You see, there's a peculiarity in the genetic make up of my family, a twisted chromosome or something. It keeps alcohol from having the usual effects on us. It's when we're sober that we're dangerous. But, when we drink...Ahhh, when we drink...it's magical. Myself, I become more open to the flow of the universe. Tell you what, just for fun, I'm going to tell you three things about yourself that I couldn't possibly know. Just to make it interesting, let's say that if I'm right, you have to answer three questions about yourself. How about it?

Casey: I'd rather not.

Leo: Come on now, fair is fair. I let you have your fun, now you've got to give me my shot.

Casey: And if you can't do it?

Leo: I quietly bow out of your life. I'll just sit down at my desk for a while and then you'll never have to see me again. I have a nice new place picked out with a wide spot for my shoulders. That should make you happy.

Casey: I'm not interested.

Leo: Okay, then, being less mercenary than yourself, I'll give you a free demonstration. Now, let's see. Rebellious,

independent, resourceful. Still, a little melancholy at times. There was probably no father figure in the home. I'd say you lived with your mother. Am I right?

Casey: You know you are.

Leo: (*He takes out the postcard.*) Wait, I'm getting another impression. Do you know a Jane Myers?

Casey: Yes.

Leo: You?

Casey: Yes.

Leo: I thought so. Your mother's name was Barbara. She thanks you for taking care of her. Very nice of you. You must have been less obnoxious at one time. Wishes you all the best for the future. Sends you her love.

Casey: What do you want Leo?

Leo: I don't know. I'm a simple man, not terribly original. Tell you what, why don't you tell me a story? Just to be novel, this time let's make it a true one. And then I'll give you back the postcard. What would be good? Why don't you tell me why you wormed your way into my life and tortured me?

Casey: I needed a place to stay.

Leo: Why here? (*Casey does not respond.*) Oh, I've hit a nerve have I? Okay, let's start somewhere else. You were taking care of your mother. She was ill? Still, she thanks you for having taken care of her. I guess that means she

didn't need you anymore. What happened? Did she get tired of that winning personality, that shy demeanour, that...

Casey: (*Flatly.*) She died.

Leo: Oh. (*Pause.*) Oh, I'm sorry.

Casey: What's the matter Leo? Was it a little more than you wanted to know?

Leo: I'm sorry.

Casey: You're bad at this Leo. The real pros don't care if they draw blood, they just keep digging. Come on Leo, you've got your opening, keep going.

Leo: Stop it.

Casey: Ask me how it happened. No? All right, allow me. And how did she die? Well, she was sick for a very long time. She was diabetic you see, and she was very weak. And then she died. It must have been a long time ago. Oh, no, it was only a couple of weeks. A couple of weeks? You don't sound very upset? That's true. Didn't you love your mother? That's a stumper. I mean, I took care of her for years, brought her her meals, gave her sponge baths, changed her sheets. These are all the actions of a person who loves someone very much. But no, I would have to honestly say that I didn't. But, why not Jane? She wasn't a lovable person. I'd seen pictures of her when she was young. She was beautiful. She knew wonderful men, who gave her wonderful presents, took her to exotic places, like the Grandview. She had a special room, on the second floor that she would always insist on, when her favourite men brought her here. She loved how the sunrises looked on the lake

from there. Then I came along and the party was over. No more Grandview. No more sunrises. That's rather uncharitable Jane. She was your mother after all. Please, let me continue. That's not why I hated her. She had an old, silver handled walking stick someone had left in her bedroom once. She'd pound the floor with it. When I wouldn't come up the stairs quickly enough. Bang. Bang. Bang. Soup getting cold. Bang. Bang. Bang. Up in the middle of the night and doesn't know where she is. Bang. Bang. Bang. I'm not that thin skinned. I had a very big heart once. But, she wore it away, with that stick. Multiplied over nine years. There must have been a million raps on the ceiling. I checked one day. There was a little dent in the floor by her bed, in the shape of the end of her stick. Bang. Bang. Bang. And every Bang made me hate her a little more. But, I got my revenge. How did you do that Jane? Very sneaky. Near the end she went blind. Just like that, one day. Lights out. Nothing they could do. She banged on the floor more often then. She'd bang for me in the morning, before I was even out of bed. (*She adopts a rough, clipped tone for her mother's speeches.*) "What's it like outside Jane?" She talked like that. Very scratchy. She smoked a lot when she was young. Fine, silk cut cigarettes. "Well," I said, "it's all right I guess." "Not like that," she said "What does it look like?" I looked out the window, at the sun coming up. It was just breaking the horizon and the whole sky was red. "Rainy," I said. "Not a thunderstorm." "No, one of those awful light rains that go on forever." And it did go on forever. For three years I gave her drizzle and overcast, whenever she asked. That's the kind of person I am Leo. (*Pause.*) There, that's how the pros do it. Those of us with a lot of practice at being cruel. We don't stop until we wring every last drop out of you. Happy now? May I have my things?

Leo: Of course. A deal's a deal. (*He gives her the postcard.*)

Casey: And.

Leo: And?

Casey: Where's the ring?

Leo: The ring? No. That wasn't part of the arrangement. The way I see it, I happened to find two items on the floor, a ring and a postcard...

Casey: That's enough Leo.

Leo: No. I can see why you like this so much. It's that wonderful feeling of power you get when somebody is twisting under your screws. Now, you told me your story and I gave you back your postcard. That deal is complete.

Casey: This isn't funny. Please, give it back to me. It's expensive.

Leo: No, it's not. I know something about jewellery.

Casey: It has sentimental value. My Grandmother brought it back from...

Leo: Good try, but it's not that old.

Casey: Leo, please.

Leo: No, the truth first.

Casey: It was my mother's.

Leo: I see, and why did you keep it, if you hated her so much?

Casey: It was a gift from my father. It was the only memento we had of him, so I took it from...

Leo: You're lying.

Casey: I'm not. I swear.

Leo: Sorry. You lie, much better than you tell the truth. That's how I can tell. Now tell me the story.

Casey: *(Softer.)* It was my mother's. She always wore it.

Leo: And why is it so important to you?

Casey: *(Almost inaudible.)* It reminds me of her.

Leo: This woman you hated.

Casey: I told you what you wanted to know. Give me the ring now Leo.

..

Leo: You're lying.

Casey: Please Leo...

Leo: Or you're not telling the whole truth which is just as bad. Oh well, things like truth are so subjective. I guess I'll have to ask for something more concrete. I know. How about I drive you somewhere far away from my hotel and then, I never see you again? There, do I measure up to your standards now? You might be an expert on being cruel, but you don't have a monopoly. *(He moves toward the door to the*

lobby.)

Casey: What about Florence?

Leo: What about her?

Casey: I want to say goodbye.

Leo: (*Frustrated.*) This isn't going to work...

Casey: She's attached to me Leo. Really attached. If I don't say goodbye, who knows what it might do to her.

Leo: I'll tell her something.

Casey: You're bad at it Leo.

Leo: You think I don't see what you're doing? You want to get back at me. You want me to leave you alone with my mother so you can tell her all about me. Well, it won't work. We're leaving, right now.

Casey: You have to let me say goodbye. Think of the guests Leo. If she's upset, you'll have to take care of her. You have a hundred things to do. I'm good at making things up. I'll make up something that she'll believe.

Leo: If she's upset...

Casey: She won't be.

Leo: ...by anything, especially by something about me, then I keep your ring. Understand?

Casey: I understand.

Leo: And as soon as you're done, we leave. And not a word about me. *(Leo turns to leave.)*

Casey: By the way Leo, you are the lowest sort of bastard.

Leo: I do what I have to. Good luck. *(He exits into the ballroom.)*

(Casey sits on the sofa. Florence enters, wearing a different dress, her hair wet, smiling. She sings an up tempo version of "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.")

Florence: They, asked me how I knew. My true love was true...La dah da dah da...Something here inside, cannot be denied. *(To Casey.)* Come on, join in wherever you see an opening. They asked me how I knew...*(Casey is silent.)* All right. No singing then. How about a little air. *(She enters the hall and opens the door.)* That's better. My, will you look at that sun. It's a beautiful day. And we've wasted half of it in this dusty mausoleum. Well, we can make up for lost time now. Let's go to town. We can drive to the harbour. I seem to remember, they had a restaurant there. What was it again? There was a ship's wheel hanging on the wall. It doesn't matter. Anyway, why don't you take a shower, get changed, and we'll go...*(Casey doesn't move. Florence sits at the desk, not looking her way.)* Something on your mind?

Casey: Yes, I've been thinking about what you said.

Florence: Oh well, we can talk about it after lunch can't we? These things always seem important on an empty stomach.

Casey: I have to go Florence.

Florence: Go? You just got here. *(She stands and begins to fidget.)* Back to Rhea?

Casey: No. I thought I might move around, you know, like you said. Travel. While I'm still young. Then I'll go home. Florence? *(Florence continues to pace.)*

Florence: Hmm?

Casey: Are you all right?

Florence: Oh, fine. I mean, it just came as a bit of a shock. I knew you'd be leaving, but I never thought...So soon? That's all. Quite a turn around, that quickly. You just sprung it on me. I hoped we could...*(She takes the key to Leo's desk from its hiding place during the preceding. She opens the desk and pulls out a bottle.)* Are you sure you want to? Right now? I mean, I was sure you'd need to stay for a little while.*(She takes a drink.)* Are you sure you're thinking straight?

Casey: I'm sure.

Florence: Hmm?

Casey: I'm sure I have to go.

Florence: Is it those things I said, about travelling. Well, you can't listen to me. I'm not always...all there.

Casey: I have to go Florence.

Florence: Well, of course. Of course you do. You're right. You can't spend your life sitting around here. Don't mind me. You just brightened up the place, that's

all. I...Leo and I will be sorry to see you go. *(She looks around at the sitting room.)* Will you look at this place. I never noticed how dingy it'd become. I guess houses get like that when nothing new happens. They just fade a little every day. You just don't notice until something bright comes along and sets it off. *(Pause.)* It was just nice, having someone to talk to.

Casey: I'll write to you Florence. How about that?

Florence: It wouldn't be the same. You're young, you have no idea how awful it is, day after day, sitting in this old hotel, not talking to a soul. Just you and your memories.

Casey: Well, you have Leo.

Florence: Leo? Leo and I don't talk. At least, if we do, neither of us listens. We've talked about all the things that don't hurt. So, we just get anaesthetized and avoid each other *(She lifts her bottle.)* Cheers.

Casey: I don't want to leave. You have to understand that Florence. But I have to.

Florence: I understand.

Casey: I'd like to stay. If I could just...Florence. Could you tell me something? What happened here?

Florence: Here?

Casey: To the hotel. Why did you close down?

Florence: *(Shakes her head.)* I can't.

Casey: Please Florence?

Florence: (*Shakes her head.*) You know how people drift apart sometimes? That's what's happening to me. I'm drifting apart. So's Leo. Every morning we wake up a little less solid. It got worse over the years. First we couldn't touch each other. Then we stopped hearing what we said. Now I don't think we even see each other. We're like clouds of mist. Sometimes we drift right through each other in the hall. Leonard's just a little more invisible than Leo and I. Leonard. He was so indistinct near the end that I couldn't hear him unless he was screaming. Finally, he just drifted out of the house. I'm surprised there was anything left to bury. It sounds strange when you talk about it, but believe me, it's happening. (*She drinks.*) It's my fault, I guess, for falling apart. We got really good at pretending everything was all right. Eventually, we started to resent each other for being here. We just reminded each another that everything wasn't all right. So we sealed ourselves up. We drifted apart. There's really nothing left now but the shells and some gas and our voices. That's all that separates Leo and me from Leonard and Dawn. Our shells and some gas and our voices. And each other.

Casey: (*Crosses to Florence.*) Was it about Dawn? Is that what you couldn't talk about? (*Florence is silent.*) What happened?

Florence: (*Shakes her head.*) Talk about something harmless please.

Casey: I guess I have to go Florence. (*Pause.*) You could go with me.

Florence: I couldn't.

Casey: Why not?

Florence: Leo wouldn't let me go alone.

Casey: You wouldn't be alone. I'd be there. We could take the car. Just the two of us.

Florence: Just the two of us?

Casey: We could head west, to the mountains. We could stop at every little town along the way. We could stay up late, at those little inns off the highway. We could ski! Do you ski?

Florence: No.

Casey: Me either. We can learn. We can learn a hundred things. And we can watch the sunrise, outside our window, every morning. Just the two of us. Just family.

Florence: (Nodding.) All right. Let's go.

Casey: I'll just talk to Leo.

Florence: No, we'll go right now. We'll just get in the car and drive. We won't even worry about clothes. We'll leave them all behind and buy new things on the way.

Casey: No Florence. I have to say a proper goodbye to Leo first. This might be my last chance to see him and I don't think I've ever thanked him for all that he's done.

Florence: Of course. What am I thinking? We'll have to say goodbye to Leo. All right. We'll wait a little while. Pack. Have a few drinks, and then we'll go. (She stares at

Casey.)

Casey: What is it? What's wrong?

Florence: The girls in their white dresses.

Casey: What?

Florence: It's nothing. It was just something that Leo said yesterday. It's funny, when you came down the stairs this morning, I thought, just for a moment...*(She stands and crosses to Casey.)* I know. I know this sounds terrible, but could you do something for me? *(She sits down beside Casey.)* Could you say "I forgive you."

Casey: Florence, what...?

Florence: Shhh. I forgive you. Please. *(She hugs Casey.)*

Casey: I forgive you.

(Florence silently holds her as the lights fade.)

(CURTAIN)

ACT TWO

(The lights rise on the lobby, a few hours later. It has been cleaned and is now filled with flowers. Two chinese lanterns hang near the outside doors. Leo enters, carrying another armful of flowers. He puts them on the desk arranges them and when they are properly arranged, arranges them again. He stands back and surveys his work. Finally, he moves them to the other side of the lobby and puts the flowers by the record player. Mrs. Phillips enters.)

Mrs. Phillips: Mr. Shaw?

Leo: Are they here? *(He rushes to the door.)*

Mrs. Phillips: I've been waiting an hour now.

Leo: Did you see anyone?

Mrs. Phillips: No sir.

Leo: Of course not. Traffic must be murder this time of night. Still, I can't complain. I wish I had another day or two. Would you look at this place. It's still a mess. The flowers hardly cover the stains on the wallpaper. *(He begins to rearrange the flowers.)* But, it's not so bad. If we keep the lights dim. *(He rearranges his flowers.)*

Mrs. Phillips: *(Noticing that she is being ignored.)* Mr. Shaw, it's after six.

Leo: There. Now, if we could only get the lanterns. *(He goes behind the desk and flips a switch. The lights remain off.)* Damn. *(He begins to fiddle with wires.)*

Mrs. Phillips: The thing is, Mr. Shaw, I didn't tell Morgan I'd be late. And we've been so busy I haven't had a chance to call.

Leo: (*Throws the switch again.*) Damn.

Mrs. Phillips: He'll be worried.

Leo: (*Throws switch. The lanterns light.*) There we go. Perfect.

Mrs. Phillips: The kids won't know what happened to me. I ought to call them and let them know where I am...

Leo: (*Suddenly worried.*) Where's the electrician?

Mrs. Phillips: George?

Leo: Yes, him.

Mrs. Phillips: He's on the dock.

Leo: Good. That's a good place for him. All right. Tell him to stay there. We don't want this to sound like a construction site when the Gates arrive. (*To himself as he paces.*) We'll just fix up the ballroom lights tonight, after they've gone to bed. They're three floors up so the noise shouldn't bother them. If it does... We'll do it when they're out in the afternoon. (*He notices Mrs. Phillips.*) Well, what are you waiting for?

Mrs. Phillips: Mr Shaw, I have to phone home.

Leo: Well, by all means, phone home. (*She picks up the phone and begins to dial.*) Say, couldn't you do it from the

gatehouse? There's a phone there. I know, it's asking a lot, but if the guest start arriving and there's no one out there...And I've got things to do in here. You understand?

Mrs. Phillips: (*Sighs and hangs up phone.*) Yes, Mr. Shaw.

Leo: Good. Then you can just stay in the gatehouse. I'll tell you what: when you see the Gates coming, pick up the gatehouse phone and dial one. That'll ring the phone here. Let it ring twice; then I'll know they're on their way. That'll save you having to run up here to warn me. What do you say?

Mrs. Phillips: Let it ring twice.

Leo: You are invaluable Mrs. Phillips.

Mrs. Phillips: (*Without expression.*) Thank you sir. (*She exits.*)

(*Leo stands for a moment, looking at the lobby. He goes to the desk and turns on the lanterns. He straightens his tie, and adjusts his jacket. He closes his eyes, holds out his hand, and begins to shake hands and silently greet invisible guests. Casey enters behind him, carrying a suitcase.*)

Casey: I'm going.

Leo: (*Surprised.*) What?

Casey: I'm going now. I just stopped in to say goodbye.

Leo: Oh. Of course.

Casey: So, Goodbye. (*She waits.*)

Leo: You told her?

Casey: Yes. It's taken care of. I said that it'd been wonderful seeing her, but I really had to be moving on.

Leo: And was she upset?

Casey: You don't need to worry Leo. She was a little anxious for a while, but I managed to calm her down. She's happy as a clam now. Consider that a little bonus.

Leo: *(He looks at the bags.)* I thought you didn't have any luggage?

Casey: They're the clothes Florence found in the attic. She said that I should take them with me. I couldn't very well leave them behind without making her suspicious, now could I? Just consider it my little bonus. I think you have something of mine? *(She holds out her hand.)*

Leo: Oh, that. Yes. *(He digs in his pocket and produces the ring. He is about to give it to her, when he thinks better of it. Leo walks through the lobby door into the Shaw's rooms.)* Mom!

Florence: *(Florence enters from her room wearing a long winter coat.)* Leo.

Leo: Mom, did you know that Casey was going?

Florence: Yes.

Leo: *(Examines her.)* What are you all dressed up for?

Florence: Casey and I were going out to dinner.

Casey: That's right Leo. There's a little restaurant, by the harbour.

Florence: It has a ship's wheel on the wall.

Casey: Florence told me about it this afternoon. She made reservations and everything. So I thought I could eat there on the way out of town.

Leo: The Victoria Tavern?

Florence: What?

Leo: The Victoria Tavern had the ship's wheel on the wall.

Florence: The Victoria. Yes. They have that lovely view of the lake. I couldn't let Casey leave before she saw it. She fought me tooth and nail but I insisted.

Leo: It burned down. Almost five years ago. There's only a vacant lot there now. Although I imagine that would give you a pretty good view of the lake.

Florence: (*Sits.*) Of course. I remember now. They had a story in the paper. There was that picture of the sidewalk, with all that burned wood and broken glass... (*She shakes her head.*)

Casey: Florence is just a little confused Leo. It wasn't the Victoria Tavern at all. Was it Florence? There's another place down on the lake. (*Prompting Florence.*) You know the one.

Florence: I almost made it.

Leo: Where were you going mother?

Florence: Out.

Leo: Mother.

Florence: To dinner.

Leo: (*Warning.*) Mother.

Florence: Away.

Leo: That's great. And when exactly did you intend to tell me about this?

Florence: From down the road somewhere.

Leo: Well, at least you were going to show me that much consideration. (*He picks up a wine bottle.*) How much have you had today?

Florence: Not nearly enough.

Casey: We don't have to take this from him Florence. He can't push us around like that. Remember the mountains, the little inns. Skiing Florence. Remember skiing?

Leo: (*To Casey.*) I'll deal with you in a minute. Mother, I think you ought to go to your room and lie down. The guests will be here in a little while, and it would be best if they didn't see you staggering around.

Florence: No.

Leo: No?

Florence: No. My mind is made up. I am taking a vacation with my niece.

Casey: Good for you Florence.

Florence: We're driving west, up to the mountains. And we are stopping at every city, at every fruit stand, at every wheat field that we pass. In short Leo, everywhere bright and happy. *(She pushes past Leo.)* And as far as my drinking goes, maybe the guests don't want to see you staggering around the halls either young man. That's right. I had my first drink when I was eleven years old, and I've been wrestling with drunks since I was fifteen, so don't think I don't know Jack Daniel's on a man's breath when I smell it, Leonard Philip Shaw. I can walk as well as you can. You lush. *(She exits into the lobby. Casey picks up her bags and walks haughtily, past Leo.)*

Leo: *(Following Casey into the lobby. He stands in front of the glass doors.)* Mother, calm down.

Florence: Get out of my way Leo.

Leo: Not until you're calm. What are you thinking? I am not going to let you go anywhere with this...with her.

Florence: And why not?

Leo: Why not?

Casey: *(Warning.)* Yes. Why not?

Leo: *(Pause. He has a revelation.)* That's it. It's so

easy.

Florence: What?

Leo: The sane thing. (*He takes a deep breath.*) Mom, you can't go away with Casey because she isn't your niece. She's not even Casey. Her real name's Jane and she's a con artist who wormed her way into our part of the hotel by keeping Mr. Gates' letter hostage. I don't know how I could have let her do that. Anyway, she came up with a bunch of outrageous lies to get close to you so that she could find out things about us. You know all those things you've been telling her? Well, she uses them to make sure that I can't throw her out. There. I said it. (*To Casey.*) You never thought I'd do it did you? Now, what do you have to say for yourself?

Casey: I have no idea what you're talking about.

Leo: What?

Casey: Florence, I don't know what's wrong with him. He's been acting crazy all day.

Leo: I haven't.

Casey: One minute he's whistling, the next he's shouting at the top of his lungs. And now he accuses me of this. I don't mean to say anything Florence, but I think it's the booze.

Leo: I'm not!

Casey: You aren't what?

Leo: (*Shouting.*) Acting crazy!

Casey: You see what I mean Florence?

Leo: Oh, that's the way it is? All right, ask her something about Rhea. Go ahead.

Casey: Like what?

Leo: Like, what color is her hair? How about that?

(*Florence sits quietly on the steps by the ballroom door.*)

Casey: Really Leo. She dyed it. She just hated looking older. It was red for a while and then, when no one would believe that, she dyed it silver.

Leo: What?

Casey: Anything else you want to know?

Leo: Yes, as a matter of fact there is. When was Rhea's birthday?

Florence: (*Quietly. Overlapped by other lines.*) Please be quiet.

Casey: We never celebrated it. After she hit thirty she didn't want anyone keeping track of how old she was. I remember a couple of parties when I was younger. It was in the fall I think. Are you happy now?

Leo: No. Give me a second.

Casey: Florence, do I have to stand here and be

interrogated?

Leo: All right, what was your father's name? How about that?

Casey: He's crazy. Do you see how crazy he is Florence?

Florence: (*Overlapped by other lines.*) Be quiet.

Leo: Can't answer that? Never managed to get that out of anyone, did you?

Casey: Would you listen to yourself? You're ranting Leo. I don't have to stand here and take this.

Florence: (*Shouting.*) Be quiet. (*They are quiet for a moment.*) Are you finished? Thank you. (*She stands.*) Leo, stop shouting.

Leo: (*Loudly.*) Mother...

Florence: Now! Casey?

Casey: Yes Florence.

Florence: Would you satisfy my curiosity? What was your father's name? (*Casey cannot answer.*) That's that then. (*Pause.*) You are cruel Leo. You couldn't leave me any illusions at all. (*She exits to the Shaw's rooms. Leo and Casey remain silent. Florence picks up the family picture on the curio cabinet. There is a long pause. She puts the picture, face down on the shelf and exits to her room.*)

Casey: You had to ruin it didn't you?

Leo: What? Your plan to kidnap my mother?

Casey: Everything. I would have taken care of her.

Leo: Yes, I can see, with your background, how you'd be eager to tie yourself down to another charming old woman.

Casey: You wouldn't understand Leo.

Leo: Oh, I suppose you're going to explain it to me now. How you're really soft hearted. Let me guess. (He apes her voice.) At the end I realized what a good woman she'd been...

Casey: No. Do you want to know how it was Leo? I don't think you know what it's like to hate someone that much. In a way, it gets to be like happiness. All the rotten things she did balanced perfectly with all the rotten things I did. But then she one-upped me. One morning, there wasn't any banging from her room. I was up at seven anyway. She had me well trained by then. So, I made her breakfast and took it in to her. I couldn't believe it at first. I put her breakfast on the dresser. She'd left a window open and it was cold. So, I shut it and drew the curtains, so the sun wouldn't shine in her face. The whole time I watched her out of the corner of my eye thinking: any second now, she's going to take a breath. But she just lay there, with her hands crossed on her chest, looking up at the ceiling. There was a note on her bureau, written on the back of that postcard. It was just like her. Nothing personal, just thank you and goodbye. Like she was dismissing a maid. I went downstairs and sat in my chair for a long time. I think I was waiting for her to start banging. After an hour, I finally realized she wasn't going to. That was the worst moment. Right, then I started to ask myself, what

now? You see, she'd won. I must have dreamed every day about what I'd do when she died. But when it actually happened I couldn't think of a single thing. I never talked to anybody else. I didn't know anybody else. All I'd ever done was take care of her. And now she was gone. She'd done it to me again. A final, miserable stab at me at the end of her miserable life. I thought I hated her before, but I never hated her more than at that moment. But I wasn't going to let it end there. I thought of a way to get back at her. I took her ring, so I'd have some small part of her and I came back here, to this hotel. And this morning I watched the sunrise over the water, from the place she loved so much. And as I watched it I described every little change in the light, every movement of every wisp of cloud. Just to prove I could have, if I'd wanted to. (Pause.) Then I came down the stairs in the morning, and found Florence. I could have made her happy Leo. I think she really needed me. But, you couldn't let me start fresh. You had to go and ruin everything.

Leo: Bravo. Great delivery. But I'm afraid you're out of luck. My last reserves of sympathy dried up hours ago. Now, I believe we had an appointment to take a long drive? (Casey rushes through the door, into the Shaw's rooms, and up the stairs. Leo follows, a step behind her. Casey runs into the upstairs room and slams the door.) Oh, that's clever. (He turns the handle.) Open this door. (He hits the door furiously.) This isn't going to do you any good you know. I'm a patient man. I'm prepared to wait out here a long time. (He waits a moment, then pounds on the door.) Open the door! (He stops.) Okay, I'm going to get a screwdriver. I'll take the hinges off and drag you out. (He waits.) Okay, here I go. (He goes into the lobby, and begins to search behind the desk for his screwdriver.)

(Mrs. Phillips enters with Gates. He is dressed in a white, neatly pressed suit, which seems a hundred years out of date. He carries a walking stick and a hat. His hands and the cuffs of his pants are slightly soiled and grass-stained. As Mrs. Phillips tries to get Leo's attention, Mr Gates wanders around the lobby, examining everything.)

Mrs. Phillips: Mr Shaw?

Leo: I'm a little busy here.

Mrs. Phillips: Yes, Mr. Shaw but...

Leo: What? Can't you follow one simple instruction? Wait by the gatehouse. Exactly which part of that message don't you understand?

Mrs. Phillips: Mr. Shaw...(She indicates the old man.)

Leo: (Instantly adopting his hotel manager's mannerisms. He walks over to Mr. Gates, his hand held before him, to shake hands with his new guest.) Mr. Gates. (They shake.) How was the trip down? Not too much traffic, I hope?

Gates: (Thinking.) Leonard? Leonard Shaw?

Leo: Yes. Hello sir. (He examines his hand.) Oh, looks like you've done a little digging. (He steers Gates toward the desk.) Well, we'll get you to your room so you can get washed up.

Gates: (Breaking away from Leo he crosses to a chair.) If you don't mind, I'd just like to sit for a little while, get the feel of the place.

Leo: Of course. We'll go through all the paperwork later. I'll just run out and get your bags. You'll have to forgive us sir, but you have caught us a little off guard. The bellboys aren't here yet. But rest assured, we will do anything in our power to make your stay here as comfortable as possible. If there's anything else I can do...

Gates: *(Sits, and looks around for a moment, then notices that Leo is still hanging expectantly over his shoulder.)* Thank you. *(During the following exchange he takes a dirty marble out of his pocket and begins to polish it on his sleeve.)*

Leo: Mrs. Phillips, may I speak with you for a moment? *(In a stage whisper. He continues the conversation as he walks toward the front door.)* What happened to the plan? Two rings, remember?

Mrs. Phillips: I didn't see him coming...

Leo: Not another word. If he says one thing about this, I am holding you personally responsible. *(He opens the entrance to the hotel. Pauses.)* Where's the car?

Mrs. Phillips: That's what I'm trying to tell you Mr. Shaw. There wasn't any car.

Leo: What do you mean there wasn't any car? What did he do? Fly?

Mrs. Phillips: For all I know. I just heard a rustling in the sumachs, by the gate. I thought it might be raccoons or something. I was going to scare them off with a broom. Only, when I went out, there he was.

Leo: (*With dying hope.*) No one else?

Mrs. Phillips: Not wandering around in the bushes, no sir.

Leo: Mrs Phillips, do you know where my address book is?

Mrs. Phillips: Under the mattress, in your room.

Leo: Could you get it for me?

Mrs. Phillips: (*Sighs.*) All right sir. (*Exits.*)

Leo: (*Approaching Mr. Gates, cautiously.*) Mr. Gates?

Gates: Is there a problem?

Leo: No. Not at all. Everything's fine.

Gates: Good. (*He polishes his marble. There is a short pause.*)

Leo: There is one thing.

Gates: (*Absorbed in the marble.*) Hmmm. Well, what is it?

Leo: Your luggage. I can't seem to find it.

Gates: Oh no. I must have left it in the cab.

Leo: Oh.

Gates: I was riding up that old road, the one that runs along the lake shore. Feels like the wilderness out there. I always preferred that route. No telephone poles or houses. It's where the walking path comes out. You know

where I'm talking about?

Leo: I suppose so.

Gates: And I started thinking that I should get out and walk. It seems a ridiculous notion, when I think about it. It must be three miles from there to the hotel. Well, I know it's three miles. I measured it out with the odometer on my car once. I used to run it. Every morning. Six miles a day, every day except Sunday. I remember, when we stayed here, Terry - You remember my boy Terry, don't you? Little boy, with brown curly hair? Never talked much? Used to follow me everywhere.

Leo: I'm sorry sir. I was very young.

Gates: When we stayed here, he used to sit in his pyjamas at the foot of the steps, waiting for me to get back. When I came running up from the tree line, he'd be there, watching me, with this look on his face. Like I was some sort of hero. (Pause.) Where was I?

Leo: The cab...

Gates: That's right. So, I told the driver to stop and I got out. I was only going to take a little walk, you see, just a few feet into the woods, but then, I got walking and the sun was coming down through the leaves. It was warm on my face. I tell you Leonard, it made me feel twenty again. So I walked a few more feet. Then a few more. And, before I knew it, an hour had gone by and I was here.

Leo: Ummm...Sir, I don't mean to be rude, but does anyone know where you are?

Gates: (Pause. He holds up the now polished marble.) Do you see the way that shines Leonard? That's something isn't it? It's a genuine Tiger's eye. My boy Terry - you remember Terry don't you?

Leo: Yes sir.

Gates: Terry had one just like it when he was ten. He had a hell of a lot of marbles, but his Tiger's eye was special. He said it was lucky. Thought it couldn't miss. He kept it in his pocket and he'd rub it for luck. We were in New York city. I was going to meet some people in a restaurant. Clients of mine. Very important. And Terry just wouldn't keep his hands out of his pockets. Kept playing with that marble. So, I made him give it to me. I was going to hold onto it, just until after lunch. Only, just when he passed it to me, it squirted out from between my fingers. I heard it go click, once on the sidewalk and then it was gone. He didn't cry, you know. Kids cry, you pick them up, pat them on the back for a while, and the next minute they forget all about it. But, he didn't cry. He just gave me this disappointed look. Made me feel about two feet tall. I was going to buy him a new marble. Hell, I was going to buy him a crate of marbles. But, he wasn't interested. Just moped around the house. Never said a word to me. And every once in a while, I'd see him, out of the corner of my eye, giving me that disappointed look.

Leo: Sir?

Gates: What can I do for you Leonard?

Leo: Mr. Gates, is anyone else coming?

Gates: Pardon?

Leo: To the hotel sir?

Gates: (Pause.) I always thought I should have sold my house when my wife passed on. No kids around anymore. All that empty space. It starts to drive you crazy after a while. Then, one day, I got your invitation and I decided to phone up Terry. He hadn't talked to me in ten years. I don't know what I was thinking. Maybe, that he and I could spend some time together. Like the old days.

Leo: What did he say?

Gates: He gave me all the usual excuses. No time. Too much work. Kids taking classes. But, you can always hear the bottom line in your child's voice. He didn't want to come, because I'd be there. (He looks at his marble.) Imagine that. A Tiger's eye. Found it, just at the foot of the path. There was this little glint in the dirt. So, I dug it up and what do you know? It was a marble. You know what? I wish I could have found it thirty years ago. That's what I wish. (Pause.) I'd like that room now, if you don't mind. That walk's tired me out.

Leo: Of course.

Gates: What do I sign?

Mrs. Phillips: (Returning with the address book.) Mr. Shaw.

Leo: (Taking the book.) That's all right Mr. Gates. Mrs. Phillips, here will show you to a room.

Gates: That's very kind of you. (They start to walk out. Mr. Gates stops.) You've done a great job with this place.

You feel like, every time you step around a corner, you're going to run into an old friend.

Leo: Goodnight sir. (Mrs. Phillips and Mr. Gates exit into the wings. Leo looks up a phone number and dials.) Mr. Terrance Gates please. Thank you. Hello. Mr. Gates? This is Leonard Shaw at the Grandview hotel. Yes, I know sir. Well, this is about your father sir. Yes, he's here Mr. Gates. Fine. He's fine. Yes sir. A little confused, that's all. I didn't see any medication. Well, he left his bags in a cab. Perhaps you could come and get him then, sir. No, sending a car would be fine. Tomorrow? Thank you sir. Goodbye. (He hangs up.)

(Florence enters, still wearing her coat and carrying her suitcases and a wine bottle. She puts the luggage down outside her door. There is a knock on the door at the end of the hall.)

Florence: Come in. (George enters.) George, what a delightful surprise.

George: Good evening ma'am.

Florence: Is there anything I can do for you?

George: Ummm...I'm finished up at the dock.

Florence: How very nice.

George: And...well...if it's all right with Mr. Shaw, I'd like to go home.

Florence: Well, George, I was just about to see Mr. Shaw. Could you wait here for just one moment?

George: Yes ma'am.

Florence: Thank you George.

(Leo, meanwhile, throws the switch behind the desk. The lobby is now lit by the soft light of the lanterns. He crosses to the record player, puts the needle down and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" begins to play. He crosses to the chair and sits. Florence stops outside the lobby door, drinks, steels herself and then enters the lobby.)

Florence: Leo, I'm...*(She stops.)*

Leo: *(Weary.)* You're what mom?

Florence: Going to have a drink. I thought you might like one.

Leo: No thanks. Booze never cheers me up.

Florence: Then why do you drink it?

Leo: Sometimes I like to feel worse.

Florence: *(She crosses to the record player, takes the record off and examines it.)* Where did you find this?

Leo: In one of the boxes with the lanterns. I must have stuck it there when we packed everything up. You know, I used to know all the words. *(He thinks.)* But, today my love has flown away. I am without my love.

Florence: I'm not surprised. There was a week there, when that was all we listened to. Morning, noon and night. "They asked me how I knew"... By the end of the week I was

begging Dawn to take it off the turntable. But, I suppose that was just like her, getting stuck on something like that.

Leo: Yes. (Pause.) She loved the summer dance. She used to spend weeks getting ready for it. She'd be picking out new dresses and practicing her dance steps. When the day finally came, she'd get ready an hour early. Then, she'd just sit in her room, looking out the window, waiting for the cars to start coming up the driveway. As soon as the music started, she'd descend the stairs like a princess. One year, there were so many guests, that there wasn't room for everyone in the ballroom. They'd spilled over into the lobby. The whole floor was a sea of dancers. I remember the lantern light softly glowing on all that silk and velvet. Dawn and I were dancing. She leaned against me, and said: Leo, I hope this never ends.

Florence: Leo, I'm...Do you remember, the other day when I phoned Miriam Lancaster?

Leo: Yes Mom. I talked to her. Everything is okay.

Florence: No Leo. I told you I couldn't breathe.

Leo: It was a bad day.

Florence: It was more than just a bad day. I can never breathe here. This place is like a museum exhibit. Family Hotels of the Late Twentieth Century. Everything carefully restored. But empty. Leo, the more you save, the more it reminds me of what's missing. (She drinks.) I'll be sitting in the kitchen, and I'll look down at those little notches that Leonard made in the wall, to see how much she'd grown. I'll remember how she used to try to stand on her tip-toes

when Leonard was measuring her. She was so tiny. And when I remember that, just for a moment, I almost see her there, standing up straight, against the doorframe. *(She drinks.)* We've kept everything so perfect Leo, it's like she's never left. I keep watching the doors, expecting her to come through. I find myself holding my breath, in anticipation. But, the doors don't open, and pretty soon I start to suffocate. I always thought if I could just run away, I'd be all right. But, the truth is harder Leo.

Leo: What's that Mom?

Florence: That the doors aren't ever going to open again.

Leo: Mom. *(He touches her cheek comfortingly.)* You just had too much to drink.

Florence: Oh Leo. There was a little opening there. We might have actually said something. *(She drinks.)* I guess that's the story of our lives. We keep missing our opportunities, because we're looking the other way.

Leo: It's been a hard day Mom.

Florence: I know. Are you going to sit up for a while?

Leo: I think so.

Florence: Okay. Well, I'm off. Don't make a lot of noise going up the stairs.

Leo: Goodnight Mom.

Florence: Goodnight. *(She exits to the Shaw's rooms. She picks up her bags. She takes a sheet of paper from Leo's*

desk and then begins to search for a pen. Giving up, she goes to the dining room.)

George: Hello ma'am.

Florence: Do you have anything to write with George?

George: Yes ma'am. I've got a pencil (*He takes a pencil out of his pocket.*)

Florence: Thank you. (*She writes.*) Now, George could you tell me something?

George: Ma'am?

Florence: Do the trains still run at night?

George: As far as I know.

Florence: Good. (*She folds the note.*) There. All very neatly tied up. Do you have room for a passenger in that truck of yours?

George: If I move a few things. Do you need to go to town Mrs. Shaw?

Florence: Desperately. I hear the mountains are beautiful this time of year. I've decided to go on a trip.

George: Oh. All right ma'am.

Florence: (*She opens the door.*) Well, no time like the present. (*George hesitates, looking back toward the lobby.*) Well?

George: Well?

Florence: Are you going to let me carry my bags all by myself?

George: No ma'am. *(He picks up the bags.)*

Florence: You are a gentleman George.

George: Thank you ma'am.

Florence: Now, hurry along.

George: Yes, Mrs. Shaw. *(He exits.)*

(Florence stands at the open door for a moment, then lets out a sigh. She takes a deep breath and lets it out again.)

Florence: *(She looks around. Whispers.)* Goodbye Leo.
Goodbye Leonard. Goodbye. *(She goes out and quietly closes the door.)*

(Leo stands, and searches behind the desk for a screwdriver. Casey opens the door upstairs quietly. She sneaks down the stairs and through the kitchen door. As she exits, Leo finds his screwdriver, enters from the lobby and begins to climb the stairs. Casey comes out of the kitchen with an armload of food. She sees the note on the table, picks it up, reads it, then puts it in her pocket. As Leo reaches the top of the stairs, she goes to the sitting room and sits on the divan. Leo notices that the door to Casey's room is open. He runs down the stairs.) Casey! (As he reaches the hall, he sees that his mother's door is open. He runs to her room.) Mom!

Casey: She's not here Leo.

Leo: (*Rushing into the sitting room.*) Where is she? Mom!

Casey: She's gone.

Leo: Where did she go?

Casey: Well, she wouldn't tell me, would she?

Leo: Great.

Casey: She did leave a note, however.

Leo: (*Low, threatening.*) Give it to me.

Casey: Now, where did I see it?

Leo: (*Shouting.*) Give it to me.

Casey: No! Calm down. You're acting crazy. Now are you calm?

(*Leo sits*)

Leo: (*Restraining himself*) Yes.

Casey: Good. Now, are you prepared to strike a bargain for the letter?

Leo: What do you want?

Casey: Well, let's see. I think it should be something special, don't you?

Leo: (*Standing.*) Christ. What? Just tell me.

Casey: You're not calm are you? Sit down. (He sits) And get a hold of yourself. Now, we started with a story, how about we end with one. But, which one? Hmmm. There's really only one left isn't there?

Leo: Why would you possibly want to know that? What would you have to gain?

Casey: Maybe it's because I know it will hurt you Leo. That's one of the few consolations I have left. Now, go ahead.

Leo: All right. If you like sad stories so much, I'll give you one. What do you want to know? How about this? She was always small for her age. You see she was born with a little hole in her heart. You can't tell from the pictures, but she was tiny. That's why we always tried to protect her. We did a good job too. She was happy most of the time. What else? She liked little things. She danced, and swam. She had a handful of little dreams. She wanted to get married, and have children. But, she had this funny idea that she wanted to bring them up here, at the Grandview. She couldn't imagine being happy anywhere else. (*Pause.*)

Casey: Go on.

Leo: You think it's funny, don't you, digging away at me like this? All right, this should be hilarious. One summer my Mom announces, right out of the blue, that she wants to pack it in and leave. Just like that. It seems the old hotel business was slacking off, so she and Dad wanted to sell out while they could still get a decent price for the

place. Personally, I think Mom was just bored. Let's just say, Dawn didn't take it well. She had screaming matches with Mom. This was our home. She didn't want to go. But, Mom was relentless. She was selling and that was that. Then, one afternoon, and feel free to laugh here, Dawn didn't come for lunch. She'd stormed up to her room after a particularly nasty fight, but when we looked up there, she was gone. Dad had thought he'd seen her down by the lake, so we went to look for her. But, she wasn't there. We searched the woods around the hotel. Still no sign of her. Late that night, while Dad and I were still looking, Mom called the police. They weren't much help. She was a teenager, they said. Kids try to run away all the time. They didn't know her. The last thing she'd try to do is run away from here. So, it was just Dad and me. Searching the woods, looking in every hollow, in every clearing. Yelling until we were hoarse. We'd come back to the house, once a day to drink enough coffee to keep us going and find out if Mom had heard anything. Then it was back out again. We didn't sleep for two days. Then, on the morning of the third day, when we came in, there wasn't any coffee ready. The whole house was still. Mom was sitting on this chair in the lobby, with her face in her hands. The phone was off the hook. The receiver was dangling off the edge of the desk. Hilarious isn't it? Well you'll love the next part. Dad was the one who finally phoned the police back. A couple of farm boys, up the lake had found her. Dad was in no shape to drive, so I took him. It was raining that morning. Dad and I didn't say a thing. When we got there, the only words he said to me were, stay in the car. They had police tape up all over the place, and Dad had to go through this crowd of policemen in rain slickers. And as they moved to let him thorough, I could just make out one dark shoe, and a little of her white dress, sticking out from under the edge of the canvas sheet. I didn't believe

it. Even when I saw that, I kept thinking, it must be someone else. Then Dad bent down and lifted the edge of the canvas. Two policemen had to help him back to the car. But, he wouldn't get in. He just sat there, on the hood, crying. I sat inside, behind the wheel, watching him. I thought I should get out, talk to him, something. But, I couldn't move. I just couldn't move. (Pause.) I don't think she was trying to run away. I guess she was going to hide out for a while, so that Mom would know she was serious about not leaving. But, she slipped on a wet rock or something. The water was only a couple of feet deep. There, now you have the whole story, can I have the note back?

Casey: You're lying.

Leo: That's not funny.

Casey: No, it's not funny Leo. It's not funny because I think you believe that story.

Leo: I do.

Casey: But not all the time. (Leo is silent.) I can read you like a book Leo. I think you ask yourself questions, some nights, when you're sitting here in the dark, feeling the weight of that gun in your hand. I think you ask yourself, if she meant to run, and hide out, why would she wear a dress, and a pair of dark shoes? Did she take anything with her? (Leo is silent.) She didn't, did she? So, she didn't think she'd need food or a change of clothes. I bet you ask yourself, about that. I bet you wonder: if she didn't mean to run away, why walk miles down the lake shore, where no one could see her? And then I bet, you start to think about how much she loved this place. And I bet you start to think: if you loved a place enough, how

could you guarantee that you'd stay there forever? I bet you wonder if she held her head down in that foot of water, or if she just lay in it and shut her eyes. Is that the way it is Leo? (*He is quiet.*) You see Leo, that's why we all keep our little secrets, and tell our little lies. Because, the truth is ugly and stupid and unfair.

Leo: Can I have the note?

Casey: Of course. But first, the ring. (*She holds out her hand. Leo takes the ring out of his pocket and lays it in her hand. Casey gives him the note.*) She didn't say where she was going. It's cryptic really. It just says Goodbye, and then at the end, she wrote 'Look forward'. What do you suppose that means?

Leo: I don't know.

Casey: Well, goodnight Leo.

Leo: Where are you going?

Casey: Up to bed. I know it's early, but I need a good night's sleep. I plan to get up every morning to watch the sunrise, over that lake. Unless you have some objection? I mean, I can always take up residence in your front yard for a while, just long enough to tell all your guests that little story about your sister. You don't have any objections do you? Then say goodnight Leo.

Leo: Goodnight.

Casey: And a fine night it is. (*Exits.*)

(*Mrs. Phillips enters.*)

Mrs. Phillips: Mr. Shaw, it's late now. My kids will be wondering if I'm ever coming home. And Morgan has a fit when I stay out this late.

Leo: Goodnight

Mrs. Phillips: (*Hesitates.*) I know it's short notice sir, but, could I have tomorrow off? I'm supposed to take my youngest to the dentist.

Leo: Tomorrow? Yes, you can have tomorrow off.

Mrs. Phillips: And what time do you want me in on Thursday?

Leo: (*Pause.*) Seven o'clock.

Mrs. Phillips: Seven?

Leo: Is that a problem?

Mrs. Phillips: Well, the sun's not up then.

Leo: That's why they invented electricity Mrs. Phillips. We've got to get an early start. I've got a dozen invitations to write. Then I want to clean all the rooms on the east side. We'll get those men in to clean the fountain...

Mrs. Phillips: Yes, Mr. Shaw.

Leo: And I've still got to get the lawns done. And we've got to shore up those rotten boards on the dock.

Mrs. Phillips: I'm going now Mr. Shaw.

Leo: Of course. Goodnight. Bright and early Thursday.

Mrs. Phillips: Yes, Mr. Shaw (She exits.)

(Leo is left alone. He goes to the lobby, crosses to the record player, and puts the needle down. "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" begins to play. He closes his eyes. He holds out his hands, collecting an invisible partner in the circle of his arms.)

Leo: And the whole afternoon, cars will be pulling up out front. The Shusters will come and the Parkers and the Lancasters. (He begins to dance.) Then at night, there'll be lights everywhere. There'll be lights on the docks, and lights in the rigging of all the sailboats, out on the lake. You won't be able to see where the lake ends and the stars begin. And then, the Ball will start. There'll be tuxedos and evening gowns, and girls in their white dresses. (A girl enters in a flowing, white ball gown and dances with Leo. The song swells as she comes in, no longer the tinny sound of the record player, but that of a real band playing somewhere offstage. Gradually, the song fades out, returning to the tinny sound of the record player. The girl fades away like a ghost, as the lights come down. There is only a dim sepia light and a spot on Leo, who dances alone. The record ends and we hear the wind blowing around the hotel, and the sound of needle striking the paper label in the centre of the record. The lights go down, leaving only the sound of the wind.)

(CURTAIN)

Vita Auctoris

Steven Spencer was born in Wimbern, West Germany in 1969. He graduated from Sydenham High School in 1988 and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Windsor in 1992. He is currently a Master's student.